

There Are Mighty Lonesome Animals Since Snyder Quit Zoo

Keeper Who Leaves Bronx Park After Twenty Years' Service to Take Similar Position in Buffalo Relates His Thrilling Experiences With Captive Creatures

By GAYNE T. K. NORTON.

WHEN a kangaroo needs a foster mother who will care for its colts? When a 600-pound alligator has to be moved, who will blindfold and wheelbarrow it to the new quarters? When rattlesnakes are to be "milked," who will collect the poison for scientific tests? When medical institutions demand frogs, so that students may watch life flow to and fro, who will supply the croakers? When the twenty-three-foot python decides upon a new suit, who will help it shed the old? These are a few of the questions being asked in the Bronx Zoological Park.

Charles Snyder, the man who for twenty years has given comfort in various forms to all manner of captured living things, has left the employ of the New York Zoological Society to become director of the Buffalo Zoo, in Delaware Park. Snyder is probably the most experienced animal man in the country and his practical knowledge of reptiles places him in a class by himself.

Education Work in Buffalo. While the animals do not realize their loss the Park authorities, as well as scientific men, are in a quandary as to how his place will be filled. Snyder left with the best wishes of all, for his going marks the beginning of a new era in the usefulness of the city zoo.

The matter, viewed from the Buffalo standpoint, is not without interest. The progressive up-State city is about to be thrilled by an intensive course in nature-study which, among other things, will teach Buffaloes to love and honor snakes. The Buffalo Zoo is under the administration of the Commissioner of Parks and Public Buildings, a condition that will give Snyder an opportunity to make it a factor in the public school system.

Unless plans sadly miscarry, the policies which will be put in practice will develop important scientific and economic results. Perhaps the most spectacular of these and the one that will have the greatest economic value will be the exhibition of living snakes in grocery store windows, in conjunction with rats and mice and propaganda explaining the damage done and loss caused by rodents and the value of the snake as a rodent destroyer. Our rodent bill last year, through loss by fire and destruction

of wheat, fruit trees and young domestic animals and fowls, to say nothing of the loss of animal and human life caused by disease spread by rodents, was considerably more than three-quarters of a billion dollars.

Exciting Experiences.

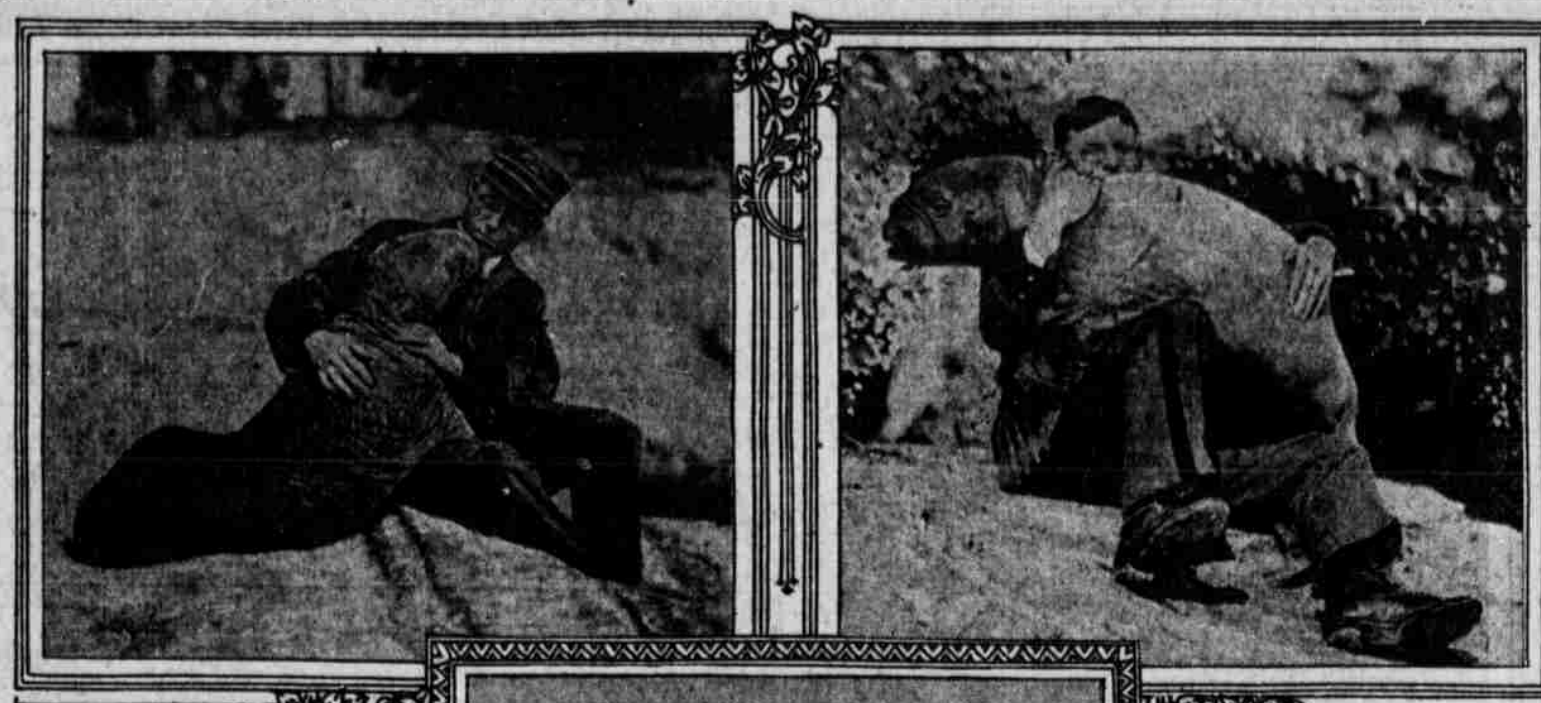
During his fifteen years as a keeper and five years as head keeper of the reptile and mammal department of the Bronx Zoological Park, Snyder has had some strange experiences which have never reached the public ear. Their recounting portrays the interesting character of a man that loves dumb things with a deep, sympathetic understanding, knowing their ways and unafraid to risk his life in their behalf.

It is hard to reconcile Snyder's youthful appearance, boundless energy and enthusiasm with the fact that he is the father of two fighting men and two daughters. Before he joined the Park staff in 1899 he was an electrician. One can imagine his feelings when he was ordered, before he had fairly learned the paths in the Park, to move five alligators.

"Live" wires and live "gators" hadn't much in common, but as he had handled one he determined to handle the other. Old Mose, the king of the tank, weighed 600 pounds and objected to having his eyes and teeth covered with a burlap bag. Snyder says he didn't act as if he enjoyed the ride in the wheelbarrow, but the real agony didn't come until he tried to take off the bag.

When asked about his most exciting experiences Snyder told of two thrilling incidents. The first related to the escape and recapture of a mountain lion. In the best regulated zoo things will occasionally escape. Charley was the man who located the escaped lion, and he cornered the animal between the side of a building and a wire fence. He was within a few feet of the snarling beast, unarmed, until a lasso and a blanket from over the fence relieved him.

Let it be said here, to the credit of the New York Zoological Society, that this lion, a black bear and an elephant are the only animals that have escaped, and these in each case were recaptured before the visitors in the park were aware of their escape. Snyder's other exciting experience is a snake story. He and Curator Diggins were fraternizing with the big



CHARLES SNYDER WITH FLIP THE PET WALRUS

python, helping it shed its skin. Misunderstanding their intentions, it broke from them, threw off the blanket and coiled, tail whirling, head poised for a lunge. The park was closed, most of the keepers had gone for the night and light in the cage dim. Death by constriction would have followed a move by either man.

The blanket was out of reach; the light was failing; deep, long hisses alternated with dartings of the long, forked tongue that is so sensitive the slightest vibration would have lured the head forward. Three minutes passed when a keeper discovered their peril. He pushed a blanket slowly and quietly into the cage and then, from the outside, pounded on the glass and attracted the reptile's attention. Snyder grabbed the blanket and got it over the snake's big head. This snake has a mouth that opens ten inches and is armed with teeth like butchers' hooks that have razor-like sides. The reptile's speed of movement and power of constriction are tremendous. It swallows a three-quarter grown pig without difficulty.

But the keeping of the Zoo is not all tragedy. Alice, the elephant, became frightened one day when about to be weighed. Mistaking the Reptile House for her building, she ran into it. After a deal of coaxing Snyder got her out, only to have her run in again. Like the famous Finnegan she went out and in again, this time through the side door, taking the screen door and the door jam with her. Out again she



COMMUNING WITH A 12 FOOT, 20 POUND ROCK PYTHON

ANOTHER VIEW OF CHARLIE AND FLIP

went and in again through the front door, Snyder and the rest doing a one-step after her.

A council of war resulted in her being shackled to the fence in the Reptile House, where she stayed contentedly until morning. She was not angry, but badly frightened. In the morning, unwilling to leave without giving evidence of her visit, she spilled the contents of some lizard and snake cages on the floor and then went happily back to her run.

Flip, the Walrus.

One of the pleasantest memories Snyder takes away with him is that of Flip. Flip was an Atlantic walrus that weighed 140 pounds upon arrival and promptly won the distinction of being the most expensive animal to feed in the Park, his fare of boned codfish and clams often costing more than \$7 a day.

A strong friendship developed between Flip and Snyder. The two played hide-and-go-seek and wrestled. The walrus could recognize Snyder's voice among the noise of a crowd. It followed him around like a dog. To take his friend and go calling on Park executives was a favorite practice of Snyder's. The awkward creature would flop its way upstairs and climb to rest in Snyder's lap.

On one occasion Flip was used as a decoy to get Silver King, the polar bear, from one cage to another. Flip recognized the bear as his natural enemy, but went into the cage with

Helping the Huge Python Shed Its Skin and Finishing a Surgical Operation on a Cobra Are Samples of Jobs That Await the Next Man

Snyder and after all other methods had failed, caused the bear to move. Snyder declares Flip was the smartest animal he ever met. Flip weighed 450 pounds when he died and had tusks three inches long.

Among the conveniences Snyder devised was a glass washing arrangement that took most of the danger out of cleaning the glasses of the poisonous snake cages, leaving the cages dry and comfortable for the occupants. It was Snyder also who found the means for ridding the snakes of the black mites that got under the abdominal plates and into the eye pits, attacked the tissues and killed the snakes. After trying dozens of remedies, roach powder applied with a bellows did the trick.

"Milk" rattlesnakes, that is, opening the mouth and squeezing the poison secreting glands and draining the poison through the fangs into a receptacle, was a part of Snyder's job. If you know anybody who would like to take up this work the Zoological Society would be grateful for the person's name. There's another little job awaiting some one. Not long ago Charley removed part of the jaw bone of the king cobra, and it is believed the operation will have to be performed again. Snyder has supplied thousands of frogs for scientific research and this is another duty that goes with the position.

Snyder has proved himself a social benefactor, ready to help a fellow being in distress. An express company called

the Park one day, saying it had a freight car full of coffee, live chickens, general merchandise and some rattlesnakes consigned to Brooklyn. They couldn't just locate the snakes and asked advice, explaining that a "mixed" car is apt to shift its load. Charley went over to the Jersey freight yard, got a broom and entered the car. One rattler was coiled on a crate of chickens, another on a coffin. He had to move every piece of freight in that car to find the other two. He put them in a strong box and the engineer consented to move the car and break up the accumulated freight congestion.

Snyder, often confused with "Bill" Snyder, who won fame in the Central Park Zoo, believes animals are like people, some of good and some of bad disposition. If it were all up to Snyder, no animal would be kept in captivity. He does not believe it more wicked to keep one kind of animal in a cage than another. Whether or not an animal or reptile is happy in captivity depends on the individual. One lion will do well and another will not. Birds and mammals will pine away, but the majority, providing they are treated with gentleness, will do well.

Another bit of wisdom long experience has taught Snyder is that the most trusted animal is the one most likely to turn on its keeper. Flip's disposition was not improving with age, and a large Australian monitor (lizard) that was a pet of Snyder's turned on him when he was carrying it to an outdoor swamp.

Gangsters and Their Battles

(Continued from Preceding Page.)

hangouts of the gangs and gangsters were the dives along the Bowery. Among the ones that were exceptionally notable were those of Billy McGlory and John H. McGurk. These two men were about the most wicked men that New York ever produced. They kept dives of the lowest character, places where knockout drops were given, where murder was done for almost nothing, and where all the gangs and their leaders came to plot their meanness. Some indication of their type can be gained from the fact that McGlory was known for years as "the wickedest man in the world."

McGlory was the more spectacular of the two, and came into general notoriety through his ownership of Sul-

cide Hall in 235 Bowery, where many women killed themselves. This place was the particular hangout of the street walkers that haunted the Bowery in those days and, curiously enough, they usually selected McGlory's as the place to die by poison. It always has been rumored that for a consideration McGlory and his henchmen would take the trouble of their hands, and would put carbolic acid or extra strong knockout drops into their drinks. McGlory, who wanted to kill themselves. Certain it is that more women committed suicide in McGlory's Suicide Hall than in any other one place in New York.

The Bowery's Past Shame.

McGlory came to New York from Boston, where he had landed when he emigrated from Ireland. He opened a saloon, with accompaniments of back rooms and women and criminals, at Elizabeth and Houston streets in 1887. That was in the days when the vice of the Bowery was at its height, and was open and brazen, and when that entire section of the city was ruled by the gangster and the crooked politicians. Neighboring dives of the day, all within a stone's throw of McGlory's place, included Billy McGlory's Armory Hall, Harry Hill's place on Houston, the American Club on Bleeker street, and a dive owned by Owney Geoghegan.

McGlory successively opened "The Mug" at 267 Bowery, a "schooner house," where the waiters put knockout drops into drinks ordered by customers and then tricked the customers of the proceeds of their robberies, and the Saloon Snug Harbor, which was made so snug for sailors that many of them were killed there and virtually all of them robbed. In this place McGlory kept many women to help him rob the sailors and to help the sailors spend their money over McGlory's bar. Later he opened the Merrimack, and in 1892 started the place that became known as "Suicide Hall." It ran for ten years, with an appalling list of suicides and murders, and was closed in 1902 by the police. McGlory died in 1913.

McGlory was variously known also as McGluek, McGlunk and McGlory—the last is said to have been his real name—and his dives were on the same order as those run by McGlory. They were dives of a feather and did practically the same business throughout their careers. McGlory's heeler and gang fighters included such men as Carey Welsh, who afterward ran "The Hole in the Wall" in Twelfth street, and "Handshaker" Andy Kelley, who ran a dive in Bleeker street after the police closed McGlory's dive. McGlory's first venture was a saloon at 103 Bowery, the haunt of such gangsters as "Brooklyn Jimmy" Burke, "Fretty" George, Perry, Pat English and Corkey O'Brien.

McGlory sold this place eventually and afterward it became one of the Owney Geoghegan dives. Then McGlory opened Armory Hall, his most disreputable dive, and ran that place until he was driven out by the police about 1890. Two years later he opened a place at Fourteenth street and Irving place, but got into trouble with the police by beating a woman. Finally he drifted up into The Bronx and opened a saloon, but that was closed also when he kept open after hours. Then he became a part of an evangelist and delivered sermons on sin at the Bowery Mission and other places. He could always get a hearing because there was no doubt that he knew what he was talking about.

(To be continued in next Sunday's Sun.)

The Heaviest Load

IT is reported that the Pennsylvania Railroad not long ago carried the largest railway carload in combined weight and size ever moved by rail. It was the 8,000-kilowatt generator of a steam turbine power unit, which weighed 86 tons, and which when in place on the car stood 15 feet 7½ inches above the rails.

It was shipped from Greenville, New Jersey, to Joplin, Missouri, on a new flat car built to carry a load of 70 tons. In order to avoid low bridges and other obstacles, it was necessary to send the car by a circuitous route.

Jolly Hermit Painter Makes Fascinating Home Out of Jamaica Bay Shack

THE hermit painter is what his few and distant neighbors call the artist, George McAvoy, who eight years ago built himself a shack on the dunes of Jamaica Bay. If the title applies to him it must be used in the jolly sense, for this "hermit" really belongs to the happy class of Friar Tuck, whom Richard Coeur de Lion supped with in Sherwood Forest. "Mack's shack" is the name given his unique dwelling by his fellow artists, but the word also conveys no truer impression than the term hermit.

One day this overworked artist, illustrator and mural painter was found unconscious in his studio in Brooklyn by his daughter, and a physician, hastily summoned, after getting him back to consciousness, advised him to attend to any worldly matters that needed attention, for he would have very little more time to do it in. "Mack's" daughter would not accept

this sombre view as final and called in another doctor. He was more sanguine about the artist's chance to recover, but strongly advised him to hasten to the Adirondacks and in clearer, purer air seek restoration to health.

Of course, being a professional painter, the sick man had oodles of money, and to take a nurse and private car and live up to a magnificent "camp" in the mountains was easy. Instead, he elected to accept his landlady's offer of a shack he owned on the flats midway between Richmond Hill and Ozone Park; it wasn't working and the sick man was welcome to it. There has been a lot written in regard to the commercial hard heartedness of landladies. Thackeray is the solitary author who presents a different picture of them, and the Brooklyn specimen bears out his picture.

Off to the shack went Mack and for a time he loafed in the air and soli-

tude, dutifully and lovingly attended by his daughter until health and ambition slowly came back. While they were coming he grew to love the silence, the salt air, the strange sights and sounds, and as the season drew to a close and it became personally obligatory to pay rent or get out Mack felt a disinclination to go back to Brooklyn.

In his wanderings over the dunes he had noticed a deserted shack without a door, with no panes in the windows—a demoralized, disgraceful appearing apology for a summer home. Everybody to whom he talked of his plan said he was crazy, but he carried it out and bought the shack.

If you had seen it then and if you should see it now you would not recognize the shack as the same place. It is a pleasant two gabled cottage with dormer windows in the upper story, a big broad projecting window, a pleasant enclosed porch fit to dream

in—in a word, a most enchanting home.

Who has wrought this transformation? None other than George "Too Much" McAvoy himself with his own hands. From his wanderings on the dunes he has piled up the flotsam and jetsam of the sea; the boards of wrecked ships, the floors of discarded dredges, old iron, old asbestos, what not. They say if you wait long enough beside the shores of ocean that big thief will bring everything at last to your feet.

With these bricks, stones, wreckage of all sorts McAvoy patched and added until the cottage, "Mack's Shack," is one of the picturesque show places of the vicinity. And all that we have described is merely the outside of the cottage.

Inside the offering is made of eight rooms, each one fitted up differently but artistically and attractively. The artist, sick no longer but a real nature

man, lives there the year round, and so to provide resistance to the fierce winter breezes, not to call them winds, that sweep across the flats, he has put a cavernous fireplace in almost every room.

The bedrooms, of which there are three, can accommodate an overflow of guests because the beds are literally bunks set into the walls. The dining room, which is the largest of the rooms, is a medieval picture, all its ornaments and articles of use being of that style. These were made by "Mack." He designed and built the furniture of the entire house, and it is quite wonderful how ingeniously he has made beauty and usefulness combine.

In living room, as in dining room, the "piece" is, as it should be, the mantel, which gives each its note. These were made by the artist out of mud gathered on the flats (there is always plenty of it) mixed with ce-

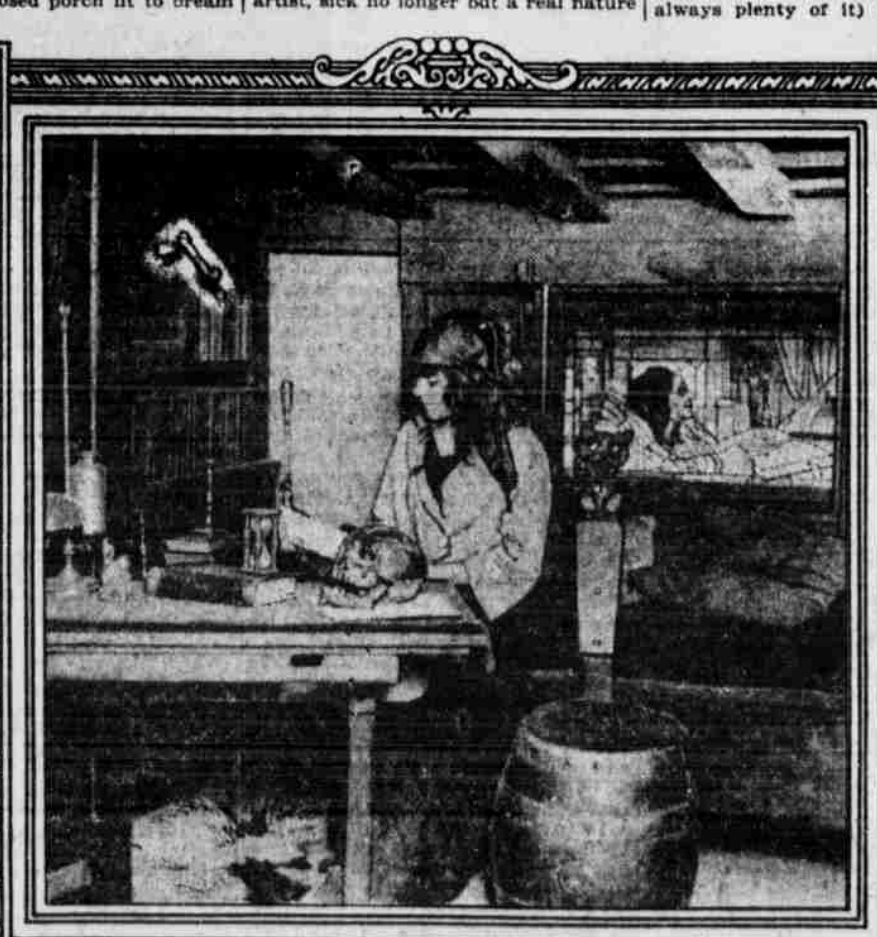
ment. In the walls of the living room he has drawn a knight in armor and colored it to lifelikeness, which he meticulously assists by hanging on the knight's head a medieval helmet and hanging near his head a medieval lantern. A bust of Alighieri is on a shelf over the fire and candlesticks of old materials and shapes are everywhere. The latter were made by McAvoy out of any chance material. Great chains, perhaps the chains that once wound round a captain, hang from a thick iron bar on either side of the fireplace.

A fascinating room draws its inspiration from old Egypt, all in it being fashioned massively and in the heavy lines peculiar to that style of architecture and decoration. Here the little-houses of Kamees and other straight nosed kings remembered from their mummies seen in the British Museum are cut deep into the concrete wall and bands of color cunningly applied as the Egyptians used color, the heaviest at

the base, adds character to the place. Gods and goddesses abound and the Buddha is not infrequently seen in his accustomed fat complacency. These statues are the work of the painter, who reveals in them quality of the sculptor too.

In each of these schemes of decoration the useful and necessary things that are sometimes out of keeping with surroundings are not to be seen at all. The designer and builder has devised hiding places for them.

Health, large, buoyant and to spare, is now the artist's happy portion, and with it has returned equally large and full ambition. Naturally Mack's shack got early to be a Mecca for his friend artists and naturally also Cupid soon found its whereabouts. There have been seven weddings which grew out of week end parties in Mack's shack, and as many engagement breakfasts and wedding suppers. The latchstring is still out to the little god, too.



A CORNER of the LIBRARY

Here are lines written in vers libre descriptive of Mack's shack:
It stands midway
Between "some place" and here.
The spot is halfway land
And halfway sea.
And halfway sun and cloud
And wind and rain.
You find the place by chance—
Not search.
A suppost there would spoil the view
And slur the wisdom of the men
Who live "next door" to life
And know the way to walk
By stars and not by book!
Mack's Shack!

ONE of the FIVE PLACES

